

The land with a rich past

DAKSHINA Kannada district, which has occupied a prominent place in the history of Karnataka, was beneath the sea in the beginning according to the scientists. This is also supported by a traditional legend that sage Parasurama created this land by moving back the sea with his power. The antiquity of the region has been traced to the stone age by archeologists. A reference has also been made to Tulunadu in ancient Tamil Sangam literature.

The region was ruled by the Alupa dynasty for more than 1400 years. The Tulu dialect is culturally progressive and is considered equivalent to other Dravidian languages.

The Alupas had to combat the Rastrakutas, Chalukyas, Kadambas and Hoysalas. They nourished Kannada culture and promoted art and literature.

According to the reports of Sulema of ninth century and Batuta of 14th century, the Muslims came to Dakshina Kannada when the Alupas were ruling. Their main occupation was business and they settled down in major towns. It was the Alupas, who historically laid the foundation of the political, economical and

cultural progress of Dakshina Kannada.

After the 14th century, the rule of the Alupas was weakened and they came under the rule of Vijayanagar dynasty. This gave way to many kingship families under the traditions of *Aliya kattu*, though they were quarrelling among themselves. They were supporting Jain religion.

East India Company

The Canara region came under the rule of the East India Company in 1799. The people were not happy under their governance. The company took up business in the district and levied taxes on salt, tobacco and other domestic goods. They were also collecting taxes on exporting of arecas, paddy and pepper which are the major commercial crops of the region. Due to this suppressive policy there was a sharp hike on exportive goods and income of the peasants came down.

During the same period the Company-government started collecting revenue in terms of currency instead of crops they yielded. So, the agriculturists had no other way but to sell their products to businessmen at a low price.

Due to this, during 1830-31, there was a sign of revolt against the rulers. This dissatisfaction among the peasants gave way to start the second historic non-cooperation movement.

The first non-cooperation movement was held in 1814 at Patna (Bihar). The officials ordered *chadi yetu* (lashings) and came down heavily on the people. When they felt that the people could not be tamed by physical force they started the method of 'divide and rule'. The government enhanced the salary of higher officials like dewan, etc., and asked them to show loyalty to the British government.

Non-cooperation movement

But in 1836, Dewan Lakshminarayanaiah used the same technique against the Britishers, hence he was sacked from the post of dewan. Till 1845, the administration of temples was with Sthanik Brahmins. They had an influence over large section of the people. The Dewan also belonged to this group. They were also traditionally working as Shanuthogs and trustees of the temples. Taking the help of all these officials, Dewan

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Lakshminarayanaiah prepared a plan to revolt against the British rule with the help of the king of Kodagu.

The people were very much co-operative due to suppression of the British rulers. Under the leadership of provincial king Kalyana Swamy of Sullia, people revolted against the British rulers, since he had promised that he would not collect revenue for three years and abolish tax system on commercial goods. Then the people from Sullia to Mangalore, under the provincial kings got freedom through their revolt against the Britishers. Collector Louis escaped from the hands of the people. But within a few days the Company sent a huge army and once again defeated the peoples' movement and brought the whole region under their control. They lynched the leaders of anti-British movement.

The Sthanik Brahmins who were at the helm of affairs in anti-British movement, were sacked from their traditional posts in 1844-45. Their hereditary trusteeship of the temple was also cancelled. The other communities who were against the British rulers — the Lingayats, Gowdas of Kodagu and Canara regions — faced severe setbacks on economic and social fronts. The Protestants and the Basel Mission came to Dakshina Kannada region in the year 1834. They were much enthusiastic to start educational centres, private press and other social services. Their enthusiasm gave a fillip to the Catholics. Previously they suffered a severe attack from Tippu Sultan.

A new awakening

The western educational system and the activities of Christian missionaries made the people of the region to introspect their philosophy and religion. In the year 1870, Bramha Samaj started its activities in Mangalore. At the end of the 19th century the Theosophical Society was also started.

Since printing technology came to this region the newspapers were published to create national awareness among the people. The missionaries who contributed much to kannada printing technology started the first Kannada fortnightly *Mangalore Samachara* in the year 1842. *Kannada Kesari* was published from Manjeswara in the year 1885. In 1900 a monthly *Suvasini* started its publication from Mangalore, and in 1907, a weekly *Swadeshabhmani* contributed much to national integration during the freedom movement.

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